
Public Participation Plan
Former Santa Rosa Naval Auxiliary Air
Station
FUD Site Number J09CA1150
Santa Rosa, California

Draft

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Public Participation Plan (PPP) has been prepared by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The purpose of the PPP is to document public involvement goals and objectives for site investigation and cleanup activities at the former Santa Rosa Naval Auxiliary Air Station (SRNAAS; the site). The PPP is based on guidance provided by the Department of Toxic Substances Control's Public Participation Policy and Procedures Manual (DTSC, 1994) and a report by Harding Lawson Associates for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The PPP is intended to document issues and concerns that community surrounding SRNAAS may have, and to provide opportunities for public involvement in the decision making process throughout the investigation and cleanup of the site. In addition to assessing existing community concerns regarding planned activities at the site, the Public Participation Program intends to establish procedures for accurate and timely release of information to potentially affected and interested citizens, elected officials, public interest groups, and officials of regulatory agencies. The program also intends to present methods to facilitate communication between the RWQCB, involved agencies, and the community. This report documents the activities conducted to date and describes activities planned for the future.

The investigation of SRNAAS is being carried out at the direction of the Department of Defense (DoD) under the Formerly Used Defense Sites program (FUDS). A Formerly Used Defense Site is a site that has the potential for soil or groundwater contamination related to activities that took place under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense. The federal government has assigned the Corps the responsibility for investigating and, if needed, cleaning up FUDS. SRNAAS qualifies for this program as it was owned by the federal government from 1941 to 1961 and operated by the Department of the Navy for several years during the 1940s and early 1950s. Therefore, the Corps, in compliance with Department of Defense program objectives and in cooperation with DTSC and the Regional Water Board is evaluating potential soil and groundwater contamination resulting from past use of SRNAAS as a Naval facility. The Corps investigation is not intended to address potential releases that may have resulted from the actions of any people who owned or leased SRNAAS parcels after it was deactivated by the military.

The Regional Water Quality Control Board is the Lead Agency within Cal/EPA charged with oversight of the SRNAAS investigation. After discussion with the Corps, RWQCB issued a Cleanup and Abatement Order (No. 94-90), establishing the necessary environmental investigation and cleanup tasks along with a schedule

for the Remedial Investigation, Feasibility Study, and Remedial Assessment phases of the project.

1.1 Report Organization

The Public Participation Program is organized as follows:

- Section 2.0 provides background information on SRNAAS and the nearby community
- Section 3.0 summarizes known community issues or concerns expressed during interviews
- Section 4.0 describes additional activities that will be conducted to accomplish the public participation objectives, and lists personnel involved with the project
- Section 5.0 outlines the schedule for these activities.

2.0 COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

SRNAAS site and surrounding area, historical uses of the site, planned site activities, land use issues, and demographics of the people living near the site.

2.1 Current Site Description

SRNAAS is currently made up of a number of parcels, which together form a roughly cross-shaped area of approximately 467 acres. It is located in southwest Santa Rosa, California, less than 3 miles from the downtown area, and is bounded by Finley Avenue, Ludwig Avenue, and Wright Road (Plate 1). The remnants of two concrete runways run approximately north to south and east to west. The site is flat or gently sloping; several seasonal wetland areas contain ponded water during the rainy season, and two intermittent creeks run across the northern and southern portions. Several buildings are at the site as are remnants of buildings originally constructed during its military use (Plate 2). Detailed site maps are included in the Records Research Report and Sampling and Analysis Plan (HLA, 1995b; 1996).

Most of the air station buildings have been demolished, and only footings and piers remain. The few remaining buildings are in the northwest portion of SRNAAS and are occupied by various small businesses. Most of the site is unused today. The north-south runway, the western part of the east-west runway, and a portion of the warm-up apron are still intact but inactive. The Eastern part of the east-west runway park. Additionally, taxiways between

the main runways and the warm-up apron and portions of the warm-up apron are being removed by one of the current property owners.

The former SRNAAS property currently comprises 11 parcels: Santa Rosa Associates II (SRII) Parcel (284.54 acres), Northpoint Association Parcel (approximately 55 acres), Wofsy Parcel (11.32 acres), Santa Rosa Junior College (13.76 acres), FEMA Parcel (69.29 acres), Bilingual Broadcasting Station Parcel (4.53 acres), Sobel Parcel (2.86 acres), Sonoma County Water Agency Parcels (2 parcels; 7 total acres), and United States Government Parcels (2 parcels; 18.01 total acres).

2.2 Site History

SRNAAS was established in 1941 as a subsidiary of the Alameda Naval Weapons Air Station, Alameda, California. Between 1941 and 1943, the federal government acquired three parcels having a total area of approximately 498 acres (*Corps, 1991*). The facility was constructed between November 1942 and mid-1943, commissioned in June 1943, and operated continuously as a military base until 1946. It included two 7,000 foot long concrete runways running approximately north to south and east to west, aircraft hangers and maintenance shops, fuel storage areas, administration and classroom buildings, bachelor officer quarters, barracks, a theater, a medical and dental facility, an ammunition storage area, water wells, sports facilities, and associated utilities (*Press Democrat, 1992*). The primary mission of the air station was to train pilots. Aircraft stationed at SRNAAS included Douglas Dauntlesses, Corsairs, Curtiss Helldivers, Gruman Avengers, Bearcats, Hellcats, Panthers, Tigercats, and Skyraiders (*HLA, 1995a*).

Between World War II and the Korean War, portions of the facility were used by Santa Rosa Junior College (Ecology and Environment, 1995). Activities at the airfield between 1946 and 1950 are not well documented; however, the facility was likely inactive during this period.

The base was reactivated in 1950 during the Korean War and deactivated on February 7, 1952. IN 1961, the Department of the Navy turned over as excess approximately 467 acres, buildings, and an unknown number of facilities to the General Services Administration of the federal government, retaining about 31 acres (*Corps, 1991*). No information about the use of SRNAAS between 1952 and 1961 is available. The General Services Administration subsequently sold most of the excess property to a variety of private, public, and commercial parties (see Section 2.1).

2.3 Planned Site Activities

On the basis of extensive research of aerial photos, Navy records of past activities, and interviews, fifteen areas of potential or known contamination have been identified. A portion of the field investigation has been conducted to date and consists of the following:

(1) Site survey by biologists to clear areas for sampling, with special attention paid to seasonal ponds and sensitive plant or animal species, and

(2) Collection of soil and groundwater samples. The samples were analyzed for one or more of the following potential contaminants:

- Petroleum hydrocarbons (e.g. gasoline, aviation fuel, oil, and diesel)
- Chlorinated solvents
- Polychlorinated biphenyl's (PCBs)
- Heavy metals

(3) A memorandum proposing actions for fuel contaminated soil encountered during above ground and underground storage tank removal has been prepared for the Corps. Contaminated soils will be covered with plastic sheeting to prevent migration of any contaminants. This material will be sampled to determine the chemical profile and will be disposed of at a California designated waste treatment facility. The amount of contaminated soils will not be known until the removal of tanks is completed.

The schedule for future planned investigation activities is contained in Table 2 in the Table section of this plan. Information obtained from these and additional site investigation activities will be used to assess the possibility of impacts to human health and the environment. The results of the sampling will be documented in reports, including a screening evaluation of possible impacts on human health, plants, and animals. Further sampling may be recommended for some areas of the site, while other areas may be classified as requiring no further action.

2.4 Land Use

This section provides descriptions of current land uses near SRNAAS and possible future uses of SRNAAS itself and the surrounding area. Because most of the area within a 0.5-mile radius of the center of the site is within the site itself, land use and demographics of the area within approximately 1.5 miles of the site center were surveyed.

2.4.1 Current Land Use

The area of southwest Santa Rosa in which SRNAAS is located straddles the boundary between the City of Santa Rosa and the County of Sonoma. The area contains a mix of low- to medium-density housing and some industrial and commercial areas. An industrial park is immediately east of the site, and retail and other businesses line the main traffic routes in the area. Although there are undeveloped areas, only four areas designated as parks and open spaces are within approximately 1.5 miles of the center of the site. The residential and industrial areas are predominantly north and east of SRNAAS, while land to the west and south is semirural, containing lower-density housing and undeveloped areas (*City of Santa Rosa, 1994*).

Four elementary schools and one junior high school are located within 1.5 miles of the center of SRNAAS; of these, two elementary schools are within 1 mile of the site center (CSAA, 1996; *City of Santa Rosa, 1994*). Although no hospitals are within the survey area, several child day care centers are located in the Roseland district in which SRNAAS is located.

2.4.2 Future Land Use Plans

Southwest Santa Rosa, including SRNAAS, is a growing and developing area. Plans for this area include possible annexation of property outside

the city boundary, including SRNAAS, to the city. Plans for the area north and east of SRNAAS, as described in the *City of Santa Rosa Southwest Area Plan*, include the following:

- Development of the business park immediately northeast of the site
- Extensive development of low-density housing in undeveloped areas
- Expansion of the industrial area parallel to U.S. Highway 101 and the commercial areas lining Highways 12 and 101
- Preservation of several additional areas as parks and open space.

Three new schools are planned for construction: on Yuba Drive and Pyle Avenue (about 1 mile and 0.5 mile from the center of SRNAAS, respectively) and on the SRNAAS site itself (*City of Santa Rosa, 1994*).

2.5 Demographic Survey

A demographic survey of the area surrounding SRNAAS was conducted to provide a profile of residents and others who may want information about site activities, and to aid in developing an effective public participation plan.

Demographic information was obtained for the area within a 1.5-mile radius from the center of SRNAAS. The information was organized by 0.5-, 1.0-, and 1.5-mile radii because the population within the 0.5-mile radius is low. Information for each radius includes data on total population, households, income, age, and ethnicity from the 1990 census, with 1996 updates and future projections for the year 2000. Detailed demographic data are provided in Appendix A and are summarized as follows:

- ◆ 0.5-mile radius: This area includes Golden Gate Avenue to the north of the site, Wright Road to the West, and Pyle Avenue to the south, as well as part of the business development east of the site. The total population in 1996 was 964, distributed among 335 households with an average of approximately 3 residents each. The median age was 33.5 years, and the average household income was \$43,800. The estimated ethnic breakdown was 81% European descent, 19% Hispanic, 5% African American,

and 5% Asian American (CACL, 1996). Possible overlap among these groups accounts for the total of over 100% of individuals with given ethnic backgrounds.

- ◆ 1.0-mile radius: This area extends almost to State Route 12 to the north, Merced Avenue to the west, Ludwig Avenue to the south, and Lathrop Drive to the east. The total population in 1996 was 4,945, distributed among 1,650 households with an average of approximately 3 residents each. The median age was 34 years and the average household income was \$46,500. The estimated ethnic breakdown was 84% European descent, 16% Hispanic, 4% African American, and 7% Asian American (CACL, 1996). Possible overlap among these groups accounts for the total of over 100% of individuals with given ethnic backgrounds.
- ◆ 1.5-mile radius: This area extends almost to West 3rd Street to the north, Irwin Lane to the west, and Burbank Avenue to the east. the total population in 1996 was 15,800, distributed among 5,700 households with an average of less than 3 residents each. The median age was 33 years and the average household income was \$45, 600. The estimated ethnic breakdown was 85% European descent, 16% Hispanic, 3% African American, and 5% Asian American (CACL, 1996). Again, possible overlap among these groups accounts for the total of over 100%.

Future demographic projections to the year 2000 predict that the total population within the 1-mile radius of the site center will grow to approximately 5,300 people living in 1,800 households, but the average household income will drop to \$42,400. The percent of Spanish- speaking residents will increase to 18%; the remaining ethnic breakdown of the community is expected to remain fairly stable. Of the population, 23% is aged 14 years or younger, and 10% is aged 65 and older. By the year 2000 the proportion of children 14 years and younger is expected to increase to 25%, and the proportion of people aged 65 years and older is expected to remain stable (CACL, 1996). The population is expected to grow slowly with a fairly stable composition.

3.0 COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

To evaluate the level of public interest in and possible concern about the Corps investigation planned for SRNAAS, interviews were conducted with members of the community by Harding Lawson Associates for the Corps, beginning in August 1995. Interviews were designed to give interviewees the opportunity to ask questions and express concerns about the site, and suggest ways of distributing information about the investigation.

The first task, a mailing list, was compiled as described in section 4.1 below. Sixty-eight people on the mailing list were first mailed informative letters with written questionnaires to fill out and return. Two written responses were received. Twenty-three people on the mailing list were then called to be invited to participate in interviews, including people who had sent written responses and others who had expressed interest in SRNAAS.

Telephone interviews were conducted with 11 of these people, including City and County officials, a federal agency representative, local business people, members of community groups, representatives of schools near SRNAAS, and residents from areas near the site.

Copies of letters and questionnaires that were mailed out are provided in Appendix C; questions asked in the interviews are the same as those in Appendix C. A confidential list of interviewees is provided in Appendix D (available only to regulatory agency officials).

3.1 Historical Community Involvement

Several people who were interviewed had known about the SRNAAS site for several years. Some learned about it from the newspaper; others found out about it from a contact at the RWQCB, from one person's work as a biologist in the area, from local neighborhood talk, or through their work as local or federal government officials. Three local residents had taken a particular interest over the years and had been in contact with RWQCB and city and county agencies to express their concerns about protecting sensitive species and habitats (such as wetlands) at the site. One person was aware that the site was used by the Navy some years ago and felt that any chemicals left at the site were unlikely to pose a problem now; another said that, historically, potential problems at the site had been overlooked.

3.2 Summary of Interview Findings

The main findings of the interviews are summarized below, divided by general topic.

3.2.1 Concerns about the Site

Interviewees were asked what concerns, if any, they had about the site. Responses included concerns about environmental issues and about the effects of possible future site development.

Environmental concerns expressed by interviewees about the site ranged from "none" to concerns about the following:

- Possible chemical contamination and the potential effects of site investigation and possible remediation activities on wetlands, sensitive plants and animals (including the tiger salamander and the plant *Limnanthus*), and Native American remains
- Possible contamination from sewer systems and aviation fuel believed to have been used at the site in the past
- Possible migration of chemical-laden sediment in stormwater runoff from the site to Laguna de Santa Rosa or adjacent residents' yards
- Possible effects of future site development resulting in loss of wetlands
- Possible effects on wetlands of altering surface water flow at the site

- The possibility of flooding
- The possibility of work at the site raising contaminated dusts in the air
- Possible impacts on groundwater quality as a result of contamination at SRNAAS and adjacent industrial sites
- The annexation of SRNAAS lands by the City of Santa Rosa, particularly if the contamination is detected at the site, and effects that developing the site might have on local elementary schools.

Two of the interviewees were concerned with the costs of cleaning up the site to “Agency” standards.

3.2.2 Communication with Local and Government Officials

Respondents were asked what contacts they have had with city, county, and federal government officials and what response they had received. One interviewee found her contacts with local officials informative and helpful, while another felt that RWQCB city officials had not been responsive to questions and concerns she had raised about SRNAAS.

3.2.3 Level of Community Concern

Interviewees were asked if their friends and neighbors have concerns about SRNAAS, and public officials were asked if their constituents have concerns. Several people stated that their neighbors (in the area near SRNAAS) were not concerned about the site, but some were concerned about nearby industrial sites. Another said that some people in the community feel possible problems at SRNAAS have been overlooked. One interviewee, a neighboring resident, stated that some of her neighbors had called her to ask about what was happening at SRNAAS, but that they are more concerned about possible development than about possible contamination. One respondent mentioned local concern about site development and effects on water wells. Another respondent felt that local concern about the site is sporadic and mainly expressed by a few people. A city official stated that a “lot of concern” had been expressed at public meetings about preserving wetlands, and that some local people want to prevent development while others want “toxics cleanup”.

3.2.4 Preferences for Information Dissemination

Interviewees were asked how they would like to receive information about the Corps investigation at SRNAAS, possibly including Fact Sheets, community meetings, media articles and press releases, and information placed in local libraries. People generally wanted to be kept informed about the status and findings of the investigation. The other topic of greatest interest is possible future plans for the site. Responses are summarized as follows:

- ❖ **Fact Sheets:** Generally, interviewees wanted to receive Fact Sheets about the Corps investigation. People wanted the Fact Sheets to state “what was found” at the site, in comprehensible, nontechnical language, and inform them of any upcoming hearings and opportunities for public comment. One respondent wanted to hear about possible sensitive species at SRNAAS and possible impacts on these from site investigation and cleanup. Generally, people wanted Fact Sheets to come out monthly to quarterly. Three respondents wanted fact sheets to be translated into Spanish. Two other respondents suggested Fact Sheets be translated into other languages represented in the communities near SRNAAS as well.
- ❖ **Community meetings:** Generally, respondents were interested in attending community meetings or open houses. Local schools, a community center, and Santa Rosa Junior College were suggested as possible locations for evening meetings. Respondents would like to have details presented about the status and scope of the investigation, sampling methods planned for use at the site, possible chemical findings including chemical concentrations and locations, and planned cleanup. One person stated that translators such as Spanish language speakers should be available at the meetings. Several respondents emphasized that nontechnical language should be used at public meetings.
- ❖ **Media articles and press releases:** The majority of people interviewed were interested in reading about the Corps investigation of SRNAAS in local newspaper articles and hearing about it through local television and radio programs.
- ❖ **Local libraries:** In addition, most respondents agreed that it is a good idea for information about the Corps investigation to be placed in a local library.
- ❖ **Other informational methods:** When asked for suggestions on other ways the Corps could disseminate information about the SRNAAS investigation to the community, people mentioned the following:
 - Presentations in Spanish at local churches
 - Using City and County publicity systems that are already in place
 - Mailing flyers to the mailing list in order to notify the public about upcoming site activities such as “large excavations”
 - Having Corps presence at community festivals and other events, to reach people who may not have access to other information sources.

4.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP) ACTIVITIES

Goals and objectives of the PPP and techniques to be employed to meet the program objectives are discussed in this section. Names of people to contact for information about the SRNAAS investigation are also provided.

On the basis of the findings from the interviews described in Section 3.0, two overall goals have been developed for the public participation plan for the Corps investigation of SRNAAS:

- To inform surrounding community and other interested parties in a timely manner about environmental investigation and remediation activities conducted at the SRNAAS site
- To involve people in the community in a constructive process to identify key issues and concerns related to environmental activities at the SRNAAS site.

To meet these goals, implementation of the public participation program will include:

- Preparing and distributing Fact Sheets to parties on the mailing list
- Updating and augmenting the mailing list
- Organizing a community meeting(s) with local residents and business people if there is sufficient public interest
- Providing access to technical information in public repositories
- Identifying contact persons who will answer questions regarding the SRNAAS investigation.

4.1 Fact Sheets

Fact sheets are information flyers written in nontechnical language to inform the community of key issues about the site investigation and/or cleanup, explain the findings, and discuss the schedule and opportunities for public input. Fact Sheets will be issued at significant milestones during the course of the SRNAAS investigation. Fact Sheets may include the following information, when appropriate, depending upon the timing and status of the project:

- ❑ Site history and map
- ❑ Regulatory agency actions and status of regulatory program
- ❑ Description of issues
- ❑ Schedule of activities

- ❑ Process for public involvement
- ❑ Location of information repository
- ❑ Name, address, and phone number of contact persons
- ❑ Summary of site investigation
- ❑ Summary of feasibility study and selected remedy, if needed
- ❑ Summary of public participation program activities
- ❑ Description of cleanup alternatives, if needed.

A Fact Sheet that described planned field activities for the SRNAAS investigation was distributed to individuals on the mailing list in May of 1998. A copy of this Fact Sheet is provided in Appendix B. The community mailing list was compiled by the RWQCB. The list, which is provided in Appendix E, includes the following:

- Representatives of the City of Santa Rosa and Sonoma County
- State and Federal agency representatives
- Elected members of the state and federal legislatures
- Representatives of community groups
- Principals of schools and a representative of child day care centers near SRNAAS
- Local business people, including people who own or lease SRNAAS parcels
- Local residents.

The list will be updated during the Corps site investigation of SRNAAS. (The mailing list is confidential and available only to regulatory agency officials)

4.2 Public Repository

As reports are completed during the investigation and cleanup process, they will be made available for members of the public to read at the following locations:

Sonoma County Library
 3rd & East Streets
 Santa Rosa, California 95404
 (707) 545-0831

Attention: Documents Librarian

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region
5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A
Santa Rosa, California 95403
(707) 576-2220
Attention: Ms. Kasey Ashley.

At a minimum, the following information will be added to the repositories as final versions become available:

- ◆ Fact Sheets
- ◆ Records Research Report
- ◆ Work Plan for Site Characterization
- ◆ Sampling and Analysis Plan
- ◆ Data Collection Quality Assurance Plan
- ◆ Site Investigation Report
- ◆ Public Participation Plan
- ◆ Screening Human Health and Ecological Evaluation
- ◆ Feasibility Study Reports
- ◆ Statement of Basis for Remedy Selection
- ◆ Closure Plans
- ◆ Public Notices.

Other information may include:

- Copies of brochures and other information about site activities
- Copies of press releases and news paper articles about the site
- Other information about the site and potential risks associated with specific chemicals that have been found at the site.

4.3 Public Meetings

If there is sufficient public interest/ concern regarding the program at SRNAAS community meetings will be held, as appropriate, to communicate details to the public regarding the project.

4.4 Key Public Contacts

A list of personnel involved with the project is provided below. The list includes key individuals at the Corps and RWQCB. These people should be called by individuals wishing to ask questions about or comment on the SRNAAS investigation.

Mr. James Taylor
Public Affairs Office
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, California 95814-2922
(916) 557-5101

Ms. Kasey Ashley
North Coast Regional
Water Quality Control Board
5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A
Santa Rosa, California 95403
(707) 576-2673.

5.0 SUBMITTAL SCHEDULE

Table 1 lists the milestones during the investigation and cleanup when public participation activities are anticipated to occur.

No dates are provided because it is not known how long each phase of the project will take to complete.

6.0 REFERENCES

CACI Marketing Systems (CACI), 1996

Demographic and Income Forecast, Santa Rosa, California. September.

California State Automobile Association (CSAA), 1996. *Santa Rosa and Vicinity* (area map).

City of Santa Rosa, 1994. *Southwest Area Plan, A Plan for the Future.* Department of Community Development. June 21.

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_____, 1996. *Sampling and Analysis Plan, Former Santa Rosa Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Santa Rosa, California.* August.

Press Democrat, 1992. *Pilots Recall Navy Days*, by Gaye LeBaron. February 23.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1997. *Public Involvement and Response Plan, Former Santa Rosa Naval Auxiliary Air Station*, by Harding Lawson Associates (HLA). April.

GLOSSARY

Cal/EPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
PCBs	Polychlorinated Biphenyl's
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SRNAAS	Santa Rosa Naval Auxiliary Air Station
UST	Underground Storage Tank